The Dying of the Light

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The Dying of the Light

by Foxtrot (SolidState)

Summary

When Will pulled them both out of the water he was still running high on adrenalin. Nothing felt entirely real because nothing was hurting right up until the point everything hurt. Pain so acute it brought Will to his knees in the gritty sand, digging into the skin of his palms and under his fingernails. He had to hold Hannibal up around his middle, both of them hunched over like drunks outside a bar, and force two fingers down the mans throat to get him to vomit up seawater - then a little deliriously tried brushing the sand and silt from Hannibal's fair hair.

Notes

You can tell I am real salty at Jack Crawford ¯_(ツ)_/¯.

See the end of the work for more notes

Will wanted, with such sharp stinging clarity, for Jack Crawford to know just how royally *he'd fuck everything up*.

He wanted to leave breadcrumbs along a forest path, a winding trail spanning half a decade of Hannibal and himself dancing ever closer like meteors on a collision path, so Jack would know it was *all his fault* for putting Will in sight of Dr. Lecter in the first place. Will thought of when he looked through the glass cage in the BSHCI, all the while knowing every conversation was being recorded even as he entreated Hannibal with *please* the way a lover would beg for *more*.

Half of him said it just to see how much it would gratify Hannibal (the answer was; a whole fucking lot), but the other half knew, with a jolt of vicious delight, that one day Jack Crawford would review every single tape and be forced to *know*. It would be impossible not to with the way Hannibal looked at him like Will hung the stars in the sky and maybe good ol' Uncle Jack had known that much already, but would he be prepared to see the answering yearning on Will's own face?

No. No he wouldn't be.

Jack would deny it for as long as he could get away with, even as '*what a cunning boy you are'* lingered on Hannibal's lips, because that still left the hope – the ever dwindling possibility – that Will did not go willingly into the dark. The desperate *(hopeful)* assertion that it was all a one sided obsession from Dr. Lecter meant Will could be elevated to the status of martyr. Joan of Arc burning on the cross. Will revolted at the thought of being seen as Jack Crawford's saint, felled in the line of duty to his country.

How long had Will suffered for the greater good on Crawford's behalf? How many years of slipping into one vicious bloody skin after the other? Jack Crawford weighed his worth and Will had come up just short enough to validate the neglect.

Will refused to go gently.

Jack had cared about Will in the way a farmer cared about their plow-horse; They brushed it and fed it and kept a clean pen for it to sleep in, but when dawn rose that horse was ultimately a tool in service of the farm. At one point Will genuinely believed Jack gave a shit about him as a *person*, as something more than a socially inept mule, but that vague distantly

paternal affection between them faded to ash quick as kindling. Perhaps in another world where Jack Crawford did right by Will none of this would have happened, but that was not the reality they lived in and Will grew to resent so deep and so wide it might have rendered him apart if not for Hannibal holding the pieces together.

Hannibal taught him the word *kintsugi*; a Japanese practice of repairing broken pottery with golden lacquer so that the cracks and missing shards became part of the art itself, strengthening the piece in the process. Will felt like that when he thought of Jack Crawford. A broken teacup Hannibal mended with shimmering gold and silver and platinum – he returned the favor in kind by picking up the dashed porcelain remains of Hannibal Lecter and mended him back together again. Each of them now inlaid with the lacquered veins of the other, coming out the other side as something stronger and more beautiful than before the cup shattered.

For a man who had gone so long hiding from himself, Will was almost aggressive in his determination for the entire world to know what side he was on. The side he had been on from the very beginning, when he didn't even know there were sides at all. This, *predictably*, amused Hannibal to no end. During one of Will's impassioned rants he'd thrown his hands up and blurted out; “We ought to send Freddie Lounds a sex tape, just to see them all freak out.”

That was an especially bold declaration, considering Will had not so much as *kissed* the man, and he immediately went a fetching shade of red when he realized what he'd just said. It wasn't like Hannibal did much in the way of '*subtlety*' when it came to doling out affection on Will, but he had been politely unintrusive - like he expected Will to get skittish if he toed the line that little bit further. In all fairness to Will, it was a rather monumental occasion to go through a sexual awakening in the tail-end of your 30's because your unfairly handsome therapist had to go and stir up things in you all willy nilly. Will was already a mess enough as it was and being faced with the growing realization that he was not precisely as straight as he thought had been...not *upsetting* but definitely jarring.

Especially when said therapist went about ripping peoples throats open with his teeth.

At this point the most accurate descriptor Will had come up with for himself was 'disaster bisexual'. Before Hannibal he hadn't ever found another man appealing outside of the detached awareness of someone being attractive or unattractive. There’d never had a moment where he found a man romantically or sexually desirable and just tucked it away in the proverbial closet or something – it simply hadn’t happened before. Until Hannibal. Because of *course*.

Hannibal defied anything anyone ever expected and if there was ever going to be a man that made Will's sexuality pack its bags and head out the door, it was going to be goddamn *Hannibal the Cannibal*. Really, it was just the sort of thing Will ought to have expected from his life.

Perhaps Hannibal expected to go on loving Will from afar, as he had done for the last several years, content to sustain himself on Will by sight and casual touch alone - because the way his brows shot up to his hairline suggested that Will just completely and utterly flummoxed him. How the man could be so shocked by this Will didn't know, their interactions had always been desperately flirtatious and intimate feeling. In the aftermath of their....*fall,* as Hannibal so graciously chose to call that one time Will pushed them both off a goddamn cliff, Freddie Lounds would go on to describe having watched them 'eye fuck each other for 40 minutes' in a blog post that went viral in less than a day. She further expounded that 'watching them talk was like watching pornography, but everybody was clothed and nobody wanted to admit they where having sex'.

Yes. *Well*. Imagine how it felt being the center of all that for years on end.

“....Well shit.” Will just sort of...stood there, ears ringing and burning hot as he stared back at Hannibal like a floundering fish.

“Will.”

“I changed my mind, I’m jumping back in the ocean.”

“*Will.”*

“I would talk to you about this in therapy but I don't have any money to pay for it. I've sorta lost my job, you see.”

“*Will...”*

Hannibal sounded impossibly fond and that just made it even worse. Will ducked his head and did that little move where he shook his hair about his face to try and hide beneath it, eyes darting anywhere but at Hannibal as he hunched in on himself - suddenly timid and looking rather like a rabbit about to throw itself out the window. Hannibal knew he wouldn't run. Not from this. Not from *him*. Will was just trying to cover his fear with dark humor, as he often did with everything else in his life.

“Sorry, can’t you hear you. I'm dead.”

When Hannibal stood, that soft little smile on his face, and stepped close enough to put a warm palm against the side of Will's throat he panicked further. Half shouted in an increasingly *desperate* sounding voice. “I asked Bedelia if you were in love with me one time, thats weird right? Who would ask that?? Me, apparently!”

“Why would you ask questions you already know the answer to, Will.” His gentle voice brought Will up short and he realized he had put his own hand over Hannibal's wrist to keep him from taking his hand away from where it warmed his skin.

“Hnngkk” Will said, helpfully.

Hannibal stroked his thumb against the fresh scar across Will's cheek, raw and red, then tilted Will's face up so he couldn't shy away. Even from the very beginning, Hannibal was the only one he could never look away from for very long. Like being drawn in by a magnetic pull his body was hardwired to answer to, impossible to stray far from and constantly buzzing beneath his skin. *God* Hannibal was pretty though, sharp lines and soft eyes and warm touch even when they where hurting each other.

“I never revealed in your pain, I regret it dearly.” Will must've said that last part out loud and wasn't that just *absolutely fucking mortifying*, and now Hannibal had that delighted look in his dark eyes that suggested everything Will was thinking was being projected right across his traitorous face. He should've fallen in love with someone stupider.

“I know,” Will croaked. “I don't like hurting you either.”

From this close he could see the copper flecks in his eyes, redwood bark in sunshine. Sometimes Hannibal smelled of the night, something so deep and dark and vast it must be what clings to an astronauts skin. Other times Hannibal smelled of the forest right when the seasons turned and the tree's started to drop their leaves, crisp and Earthy. Will wondered what he must smell like to Hannibal now that his brain wasn't putting up a valiant effort to set itself on fire, right now he probably just smelled like the antiseptic Hannibal cleaned their wounds with.

“What are you thinking of, my clever boy.”

“Everything. Nothing. I dunno.” In reality he was thinking of how much he liked being called his 'clever boy', but Will felt like he'd already said enough embarrassing things tonight so kept that thought to himself.

Normally Hannibal disliked when he said stuff like *dunno* and *whatever,* but right now he looked so absolutely besotted Will thought he could recite '*there once was a man from Nantucket'* and Hannibal would think it was a sonata. Will did his very best to use his words, especially since he felt Hannibal was owed a great many of them. All things considered.

“I just...I thought you were dead.” Hannibal went very very still, listening as Will clearly struggled to keep explaining the rushing torrent of his thoughts. It felt like he was still being dashed against the cliff-side by the waves, his thoughts less a train and more a pileup on the freeway. “If the water didn't kill us I was sure Dolarhyde had killed you, you were so so cold...You smelled of smoke and blood.”

Smoke and blood. Ocean and darkness. How many times could they be shattered until there was nothing left of the teacup.

“Will, I...”

“No, let me finish.” He knew Hannibal hated being interrupted, but lately it seems he was prone to giving into Will even more than he ever had before. “I think you did. *Die*, I mean. For a little bit. On the shore you were so still and I couldn't hear your heartbeat anymore...Just for a moment, probably not even a whole second, but for just a little bit you were *gone*. You were just laying there and it was so fucking cold and there was sand in your hair and blood on your mouth a-and...”

Distantly Will was aware he had started to hiccup with tears. Hannibal looked absolutely devastated, a fractured expression that contorted his face like he was in pain. In the face of Will's sorrow, maybe he was.

"*You left me, Hannibal."* Will said so softly, so quietly, the roaring winds outside could have carried it away.

When Will pulled them both out of the water he was still running high on adrenalin. Nothing felt entirely real because nothing was hurting right up until the point *everything* hurt. Pain so acute it brought Will to his knees in the gritty sand, digging into the skin of his palms and under his fingernails. He had to hold Hannibal up around his middle, both of them hunched over like drunks outside a bar, and force two fingers down the mans throat to get him to vomit up seawater - then a little deliriously tried brushing the sand and silt from Hannibal's fair hair.

Something about seeing Hannibal so disheveled and still made Will feel unstable. If it wasn't for Chiyoh there was no doubt in Will's mind that Hannibal would be dead right now and that would have been a death sentence for himself too. Hannibal was the last stop on the train and if he hadn't survived Will didn't have it in him to go on alone.

Not after everything.

Will was still sobbing as Hannibal gathered him close, both arms wrapped around his shoulders to hold Will tight against the broad span of his chest then dug his fingers into the shaggy curls at the nape of his neck when he pressed his face into the crook of Hannibal's throat. Will had not felt truly warm in the days since the fall, *the push, the leap, the jump, the pact,* and only now did he feel the frigid chill in his fingers recede.

"You left me, Hannibal. Never leave me again. Please. *Please*." He knew he must sound pitiful, childish even, but couldn't bring himself to care as he dug his fists into the back of Hannibal's fine cashmere sweater. Aubergine, deep and rich like the heavy accent in his voice that still carried a rough burr. No matter how long Hannibal spent on American soil his accent never smoothed out and it would be a lie to say Will didn't like the throaty cadence.

"Will. Darling boy. *Mano meile.* I would not leave you like that, never again. Forgive me*."*

From the comfortable warm spot Will had tucked himself into against Hannibal, he could feel the other man tremble. Wanted very much to soothe him without quite knowing how. He was fairly sure that Hannibal would be amenable to the first thought that came unbidden, and without an ounce of guilt, to Will's mind - so he followed it through to fruition by tipping his head up to kiss the underside of Hannibal's jaw. A warm press of lips that did not inspire lust so much as it inspired *tenderness*. A kiss not to designed to arouse but to comfort, to draw Hannibal away from the dark. Hannibal let out a startled breath and clutched him tighter.

“Shit I am sorry, I should have asked.”

“You never need ask, Will. All of me is yours and you have of me whatever you wish to have.” Hannibal said into the mess of Will's curls where his face was pressed against the top of his head.

“...Anything?” He asked tentatively.

“Anything. Everything.”

“So if I wanted to kiss you, I could...*theoretically* just do that whenever I want?”

Hannibal laughed a little wetly and butted his cheek against Will's in an uncharacteristically submissive display. “I would beg for it if that would please you.”

“Would it please you if *I* begged, Hannibal?”

“Yes. Immeasurably.”

“*Please*.” He said the way he'd done in the BSHCI.

Part of Will sort of figured that kissing a man might feel weird, not necessarily bad but...strange? *Different*? It didn't. It just felt right, because it was Hannibal that he was kissing and it wasn't so much that he was kissing a man so much as he was just kissing somebody he loved so entirely that *not kissing him* was the weirder option. They should have done this sooner. Days ago, weeks, years even. Could they make up for lost time or was that just taking advantage of the new space they'd carved for themselves in bone and ash? Will found his thoughts abruptly quieting because Hannibal had done something clever with his tongue and that effectively shut off all advanced thinking capabilities in Will's brain.

It wasn't until Hannibal let out a little huff of breath against Will's mouth that he realized he'd guided the man into sitting on the chase lounge and Will was comfortably seated straddling his lap. Perhaps he should be less surprised at how easy this was, easier than any other relationships Will ever had and o*h my god* were they in a relationship? Is that what this is? They went over the cliff like goddamn Thema and Louise. Will gripped a hand in the back of Hannibal's hair where it had started to grow out just a little since BSHCI, gave a cautious little tug just to test the mans limits and was rewarded with the most delightful moan.

Hannibal forced Will to slow with a gentle hand on his cheek, parting them enough so they were panting open-mouthed into the space between them and Will gave one last little pull of his hair just to see the way Hannibal barred his throat to him. Looked down at Will with eyes so dark the light from the hearth set them ablaze.

Will understood now that this wanting in himself wasn't *new*, it was cultivated over years and years of not knowing what to do with the intensity of it all until he couldn't keep it contained. Hannibal gently untangled Will's grip from his hair, looking like it was costing him a great deal to slow the fevered pitch of their touches, and instead held both of Will's scarred trembling hands between them – right against the thundering of Hannibal's heart against his breast. Will bowed his head against Hannibal's shoulder, breathing deep and shaky to try and calm the racing of his blood. He understood why Hannibal made them stop and loved him even more for it.

This was new for him, uncharted waters he didn't quite know how to navigate, and that made Will feel a little like some blushing virgin on her wedding night. They were both still running on the dregs of adrenalin and Chiyoh's left over pain killers, both of them riddled with injury and the sickly mottled purple of fresh bruises. The bullet wound, a tidy through-and-through at Hannibal's abdomen, was wrapped in fresh gauze and made Hannibal wince when he moved too quickly while Will felt like there wasn't a single inch of his body not covered in bruising. Now was not the time for more.

There was no longer an expiration date on their closeness, they had all the time in the world now.

Once their breathing evened into something less erratic Hannibal put a big gentle hand at the nape of Will's neck. Just a grounding touch but it made Will hopelessly overfond and it was easy as anything to say *"I love you"* into the soft glide of cashmere against his cheek where it rested on Hannibal's shoulder.

The sound Hannibal made was somewhere between agony and bliss, almost a sob. It made Will want to say it again, so he did.

"I love you, Hannibal."

"*Will."* Yeah, that was definitely a sob.

He was grinning, big and sappy, as he said it again and again and again just to hear the desperate little sounds Hannibal tried to contain.

"Mano sirdis kalba meilės kalba. *Aš tave myliu,Will."*

Somewhere in time the cup reformed, glued itself together with another vein of gold. *I am Will Graham, it is...after midnight, I think, and I am in the cliff house with Hannibal.*

By the time Jack Crawford arrived at the safe-house, surrounded in unmarked police cars and armed agents waiting on the outskirts, Hannibal and Will where no where to be found. Price and Zeller would share a look, something like pity, as Jack called out for Will as if he where simply hiding under the bed like a frightened child and would come running.

Evidence of Will and Hannibal was everywhere; from the smallest fingerprint to the bloody bandages left in the bathroom wastebasket, and the slow realization that they hadn't even attempted to hide their tenant in the home left something cold dropping in Jacks gut. Used medical supplies were left behind with empty bottles of pain killers, dishes that had yet to be

put away where stacked on a drying rack in the kitchen, and two differently sized sets of clothes where tucked into a dresser in the master bedroom.

The spare room was conspicuously tidy, untouched. A thin layer of dust settled on the surfaces.

Will wanted, with such sharp stinging clarity, for Jack Crawford to know just how royally *he'd fuck everything up*. Jack Crawford knew, even as he tried to deny the creeping sense of dread, that he had lost. Lost Dr. Lecter, lost Will, lost the game. It was written in Will's torn jacket left draped across the master bedrooms unmade bed, in the BSHCI security footage were Will put his palm flat against the ballistic glass as if they'd been the only two people in the entire world, it was in the glittering wedding ring Crawford found sitting on his office desk when he came back from speaking to Alana. Tarnished and scuffed by Will's fall into the sea, a silver band that never looked quite right on Will - as if his very skin revolted the touch of it.

Will Graham did not go gentle into that good night. He went vicious and loud and whole.

End Notes

Freddie Lounds: and they where cannibal roommates

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